

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A method for communicating and a communications system apparatus are disclosed. The apparatus comprises a communications platform and a gateway communicatively coupleable with a terrestrially-based network. The communications platform is disposed in a stratospheric location and transponds information between at least one of a plurality of user terminals and the gateway in essentially a bent pipe
10 fashion. The method comprises the steps of receiving a first signal from the user terminal having an antenna in a stratospherically-based communication platform that maintains an apparent position relative to the user terminal within a beamwidth of a user terminal antenna and transponding the first signal from the stratospherically based communications platform to a gateway ground station.